

The Path to Succeed This Life and Future Lives

Vyagghapajja (Dīghajāṇu) Sutta

The main goal of Buddhism is to point out the path of happiness which is the main purpose of everyone. The supreme Buddha, as a practical teacher, always describes the peaceful path for wellbeing of this life and hereafter. According to audience, the Buddha explains his message in short or long. No matter whether the Buddha speaks to lay people or monks, he always points out the path of liberation from suffering. *Vyagghapajja [Dīghajāṇu]* Sutta which comes in Anguttara Nikaya clearly points out the path of happiness in this life and hereafter.

On one occasion, when the Buddha was at kakkarapatta, Dighajanu (Vyagghapajja), a householder came to visit the Buddha. After bowing down, Vyagghapajja, sitting on one side, said to the Buddha; “We are lay people enjoying sensuality; living crowded with spouses and children; using Kasi fabrics and sandalwood; wearing garlands, scents, and creams; handling gold and silver. May the Blessed One teach the Dhamma for those like us, for our happiness and well-being in this life and in future lives.”

Here the Buddha kindly explains the facts how to succeed in this life and hereafter. **First, for this life;**

“Cattārome, vyagghapajja, dhammā kulaputtassa diṭṭha-dhamma-hitāya saṃvattanti diṭṭha-dhamma-su-khāya. Katame cattāro? Uṭṭhānasampadā, ārakkhasampadā, kalyāṇamittatā, samajīvitā.

Four conditions, Vyagghapajja, conduce to a householder's wellbeing and happiness in this very life. They are;

1. The accomplishment of determined effort (*utthāna-sampadā*)
2. The accomplishment of watchfulness (*ārakkha-sampadā*)
3. Good friendship (*kalyāṇamittatā*)
4. Balanced livelihood (*sama-jīvikatā*).

1. Effort (*utthāna-sampadā*):

First one explains the importance of earning wealth in righteous ways with effort for wellbeing in this life. There is the case where a lay person, by whatever occupation he makes his living—whether by farming or trading or cattle tending or archery or as a king's man or by any other craft—is clever and untiring at it, endowed with discrimination in its techniques, enough to arrange and carry it out. This is called being consummate in initiative.

2. Watchfulness (*ārakkha-sampadā*):

This means the protection of wealth which is earned hard and righteously. There is the case when a lay person has righteous wealth—righteously gained, coming from his initiative, his striving, his making an effort, gathered by the strength of his arms, earned by his sweat—he manages to protect it through vigilance [with the thought], ‘How shall neither kings nor thieves make off with this property of mine, nor fire burn it, nor water sweep it away, nor hateful heirs make off with it?’ This is called being consummate in vigilance or watchfulness.

3. Good friendship (*kalyānamittatā*):

This explains the association of good friends who explain the Dhamma which is useful for this life and future lives. There is the case where a lay person, in whatever town or village he may dwell, spends time with householders or householders’ sons, young or old, who are advanced in virtue. He talks with them, engages them in discussions. He emulates consummate conviction in those who are consummate in conviction, consummate virtue in those who are consummate in virtue, consummate generosity in those who are consummate in generosity, and consummate discernment in those who are consummate in discernment. This is called admirable friendship.

4. Balance livelihood (*sama-jivikatā*).

This shows the way how to spend wealth according to income in the correct way. There is the case where a lay person, knowing the income and expenditures of his wealth, maintains a livelihood accordingly, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher, [thinking], ‘Thus will my income exceed my expenditure, or my expenditures exceeds my income.’ Just as when a weightier or his apprentice, when holding the scales, knows, ‘It has tipped down so much or has tipped up so much,’ in the same way, the lay person, knowing the income and outflow of his wealth, maintains a livelihood in tune, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher, [thinking], ‘Thus will my income exceed my outflow, and my outflow will not exceed my income.’ If a lay person has a small income but maintains a grand livelihood, there will be rumors of him, ‘This clansman devours his wealth like a fruit-tree eater.’ If a lay person has a large income but maintains a miserable livelihood, it will be rumored of him, ‘This clansman will die of starvation.’ But when a lay person, knowing the income and outflow of his wealth, maintains a livelihood in tune, neither a spendthrift nor a penny-pincher, [thinking], ‘Thus will my income exceeds my expenditure or my expenditure exceeds my income,’ this is called maintaining one’s livelihood in tune.

In above four factors, the Buddha points out the way to succeed in this life. Everyone likes to succeed in this present life whether they believe in next life or not. Among those four things, good association plays a main role. Association always decides our success or failure.

Secondly, for future life;

Cattārome, vyagghapajja, dhammā kulaputtassa sam-parā-ya-hitāya saṃvattanti sam-parā-ya-su-khāya. Katame cattāro? Saddhāsampadā, sīlasampadā, cāgasampadā, paññāsampadā.

Four conditions, Vyagghapajja, conduce to a householder's weal and happiness in his future life. They are;

1. The accomplishment of confidence (*saddhā-sampadā*)
2. The accomplishment of virtue or morality (*sīla-sampadā*)
3. The accomplishment of charity or generosity (*cāga-sampadā*)
4. The accomplishment of wisdom (*paññā-sampadā*)

When someone comes to this level, he should have a clear understanding about the Karmic law and the dependent origination which is a very important understanding that a person can gain in a Buddha's time. With the understanding listening to what Buddha taught, someone who wishes to go forward for the wellbeing of future life and the *Sansaric* journey can see the path he or she should practice. Here four conditions are kindly declared to follow by the blessed one. One's real success or happiness depends on how far he or she has achieved these qualities. These qualities are very useful for inner peace and liberation from suffering.

1. The confidence (*saddhā-sampadā*):

When someone hopes to go forward on the path of liberation at the beginning, he should have some kind of confidence in the Buddha's message which is immediately effective and visible results. When someone practices what the Buddha taught, he or she can see the results. Then his or her confidence gradually increases in the Dhamma and the Sangha too.

If someone hopes to go on the path of purification with practicing Buddha's message, he or she should develop the quality of confidence gradually. Confidence is the first step in every religion. The difference of Buddhism is it never says 'come and trust or believe, it says 'come and see' to each and every one. To achieve confidence, listening to what the Buddha taught is very important. The reason is confidence increases according to our knowledge and understanding in the worldly reality what Buddhism describes. That is why the Buddha said,

One who sees the Dhamma sees me; (*Yo dhammam passati so mam passati*)

One who sees me sees the Dhamma (*Yo mam passati so dhammam passati*).

Seeing the Buddha and seeing the Dhamma are interrelated. The more we learn what the Buddha taught, the more we are confident in the Buddha. At the beginning of the path of liberation, confidence can arise by seeing or hearing something in Buddhist tradition. Further, it increases by listening to the Buddha's real message (which relates to understand the Karmic law and the

Dependent Origination) and associating with the Buddha's noble disciples. Depending on our knowledge about our mind, body and the word according to the Buddha's message, we can go forward with confidence. Generally, we can explain confidence as the faith in the Triple Gem i.e., Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. More exposure to the noble qualities of The Supreme Buddha, His teachings (Dhamma) and His noble disciples (Sangha) along with motivation and positive attitude can be called confidence in Buddhism. Especially, the confidence in Buddha's Enlightenment is the key to cultivate all the qualities of Enlightenment (*Saddhahati tathāgatassa bodhim*).

2. Virtue or Morality (*sīla-sampadā*):

This quality indicates the discipline in speech and behavior. When someone is knowledgeable in the Karmic law and the dependent origination, he or she tries to control his or her speech and behavior as much as he or she can for the wellbeing of life. Having good discipline helps to successful spiritual life with concentration and insight. According to Buddhism, virtue should be together with wisdom.

3. Charity or Generosity (*cāga-sampadā*):

When someone goes on the path of liberation, he or she practices loving kindness too. Then he is generous to offer something to others concerning their qualities and needs. On the path of heaven, practicing three merits is one of the major characters. The three meritorious deeds are generosity, virtue and meditation. He who practices generosity undergoes a supreme happiness. Generosity is highly appreciated by the noble one and the wise. Also, practicing generosity is one of the ways to win friends. That is why the Buddha Says; he who is generous wins friends.

4. Wisdom on intelligence (*paññā-sampadā*):

Wisdom or intelligence, which mainly helps us to overcome suffering and attain liberation from defilements, is highly praised in Buddhism. The main cause whether we are happy is the level of our wisdom. Our real success depends on how much we have achieved wisdom. Hence, wisdom has been compared to a gem (පඤ්ඤා නරානං රතන). Wisdom brings purification (පඤ්ඤාය පරිසුඤ්ඤානි). There is no other bright light like wisdom (නත්ථි පඤ්ඤා සමා ආභා). Wisdom is used in several terms in Pali language such as Sammā Ditti (සම්මා දිට්ඨි), Paññā (පඤ්ඤා), Amoha (අමෝහ). Wisdom should be increased from the beginning till the end to the maximum level of the path of enlightenment. Therefore Buddhism always guides us to gain wisdom through all kinds of advices that the supreme Buddha explained in his entire life.

We usually experience through our senses such as eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. When objects such as forms, sounds, smell, taste reach senses, we experience about the world. The nature of this experience is arising at the moment and instantly ceases at once. Whatever we experience through six senses, five aggregates arise at that moment. Also, they immediately cease. Five aggregates are forms (*Rupa*), feelings (*Vedanā*), perception (*Saññā*), mental formations (*Sankhāra*) and consciousness (*Viññāna*). These five things arise together and cease together. They

cannot be divided. We learn them by intelligence. These five aggregates, six internal senses or external objects are not permanent. They arise with the conditions at the moment, and they cease immediately when conditions separate. However, because of our ignorance we think they are permanent. Wisdom is against of this delusion. The nature of all conditions is that; **Not being occurred (in the past) comes to an occurrence. Being occurred (at the present) will not come to (the future) occurrence.** (අනුත්ථා සම්භූතං නුත්ථා න භවිස්සති). It means if we experience something now, it was not happened in the past in the same way like now.

The Buddha explains the theory in his main teaching that in the dependent origination like this;

"This being - this comes to be" (*Asmim sati idam hoti*)

With the arising of this – this arises" (*Imassa uppādā idam uppajjati*)

This not being – this doesn't come to be (*Asmim asati idam na hoti*)

With the cessation of this – this ceases" (*Imassa nirodha idam nirujjati*)

Also, present experience doesn't go to the future in the same way. If somebody can understand this reality, he is ready to give up extremes about the past and the future. Also, he tries to live in the present moment seeing arising and ceasing wisely with fully awareness. Understanding of this impermanence and reflecting on impermanence is the main skill to overcome suffering completely and for the wellbeing of future life.



May the Triple Gem Bless you!

තෙරුවන් සරණයි!

May All Beings be Well Happy and Peaceful!

(සියලු සත්ත්වයෝ සුවපත් වෙත්වා!)

(Tuesday Dhamma Discussion of Los Angeles Buddhist Vihara in Pasadena. 01/29/2019)